By C. N. and A, M. WILLIAMSON, Authors of "The Lightning Con-

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# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

66 ELL the truth when desired, spice with prevarication when necessary and never part with the whole truth at one time, since waste is sinful." was one of the maxims by which the chancellor guided his own actions. though he did not give it away for the benefit of others, and he had made the most of that prudent policy today.

He had told his emperor no lies, even through the telephone, where forget has left a note at your house." fulness may be pardonable, but he had arranged his truths as skillfully as he arranged his pawns on a chessboard.

It was said by some who pretended to know that Count von Breitstein had had a Jesuit for a tutor; but, be this as it might, it was certain that when he had a goal to reach he did not pick his footsteps by the way. A flower here or there was apt to be trodden down, a small life broken, a reputátion stained, but what of that when Rhaetia's standard was to be planted upon the mountain top?

Supposing he had said to the emperor after his promise of plain speaking: "Your majesty's journey today is a wild goose chase. I happen to know thas those you seek are still at their notel in Kronburg. When I heard from my brother Egon that they were leaving Schloss Lyndalberg suddenly and secretly I went immediately to Kronburg and called upon the ladies. My intention was to frighten them away by telling them that the fraud was found out and they had better disappear decently of their own accord unless they wished to be assisted over the frontier. They actually dared refuse to see me, alleging as an excuse the sudden illness of their companion. which had prevented their leaving Kronburg, as they intended. While I was awaiting this answer I learned that some person was telegraphing from the railway station to the hotel manager inquiring if the Mowbrays had gone. I guessed this person to be your majesty and ventured to use my influence strongly with the manager, so successfully that I was permitted to dictate the reply and obtain his promise that the matter should be strictly confidential. I judged that your majesty had meant to take the Orient ex press, but had missed it, and, as you telephoned from the station, I had no doubt that you intended to follow either by the next train or by a special. Soon I learned that no special had been ordered by any one. I ascertained the time of the next train and sought your majesty in it. Had my eloquence then prevailed with you I should have urged your return with me, and thus you would have been spared the useless journey to Felgarde. As you remained obstinately faithful, however, I con sidered myself fortunate to have you out of the way, so that I could hurry back, and, unhampered by your suspicions, set about learning still more facts to Miss Mowbray's discredit or

ed in time." Supposing that Count von Breitstein's boasted frankuess had led Lim to make these statements, it is probable that Rhaetia would not long have rejoiced in a chancellor so wise and so self sacrificing.

inventing a few if those which un-

doubtedly existed could not be unearth-

It was well enough for the old man to declare his willingness to retire if his master desired it, but he had counted, as people who risk all for great ends do count, on not being taken at his word. He loved power because he had always had it, and without power life would not be worth the living. but it was honestly for the country's sake and for Leopold's sake rather than his own that he desired to hold and keep his high position. Without his strong hand to seize the helm should Leopold's fail for some careless instant be conscientiously believed that the ship of state would be lost.

He had-done his best to disillusion a young man tricked into love for an adventuress. Now neither as chancellor nor friend could he make further open protest unless favored by fate with some striking new development. There were nevertheless other ways of working, and he had but taken the first step toward interference. He meant, since worse had come to worst, to go on relentlessly, and he would hardly have considered it criminal to destroy a woman of the type to which he assigned Helen Mowbray, provided no means less stringent sufficed to snatch her from the throne of Rhaetia.

There were many plans seething in the chancellor's head, and Egon's help might be necessary. He might even have to go so far as to bribe Egon to kiduap the girl and sacrifice himself by marrying her out of hand before she had a chance to learn that the emperor was ready to meet her demands. Egon had been attentive to Miss Mowbray. It might well be believed even by the emperor that the young man had been madly enough in love to act upon his own initiative, uninfluenced by his brother.

The chancellor's first act on parting with Leopold was to telegraph Captain von Breitsteln to meet the train by which he would return to Kronburg. Therefore on arriving at the station he was not surprised to see Egon's handsome face prominent among others less attractive on the crowded platform.

"Well?" questioned the young man as the old man descended.

"I'm sorry to say it is very far from well. But between us we shall, I hope, improve matters. You have kept yourself au courant with everything that 's happened in the camp of the en-

"Say 'any one.' and I can answer you more easily. Who do you think has arrived at the hotel?"

"The devil, probably, to complicate

"I've heard him called so, but a good looking devil and devilishly pleasant. I met him in his motor, in which he'd hunting lodge in"-"What! You mean the Prince"-

"Of Darkness, you've just named him." . Egon gave a laugh at his own repartee, but the chancellor heard neither. His hard face brightened. "That's well," said he grimly. "Here we have just the young man to see us through this bad pass if he's as good looking as ever and in his usual mood for mischief. If we can interest him in this affair, he may save me a great deal of trouble and you a misalliance."

"But your wedding present to me"began Egon blankly.

"Don't distress yourself. Do what you can to assist me, and, whatever the .nd. you shall be my heir, I promise you. Is the prince at the hotel

"Yes. He had been to call on you at your town house, he stopped his automobile to tell me, and, hearing from me that you would be back this evening, he decided to stay all night at the hotel, so that he could have a chat with you after your return, no matter at what hour it might be. I believe he

"I will go to him, and we can then discuss its contents together," said Count von Breitstein, and the chauffeur who drove his electric carriage was told to go to the Hohenlangenwald

The prince, who would, the chancellor hoped, become the deus ex machina, was engaged in selecting the wines for his dinner when Count von Breitstein's card was sent in. He was pleased to say that he would receive his visitor, and, Egon having been sent about his business, the chancellor was shown into the purple drawing room of the suit reserved for royalty.

As he entered a young man jumped up from an easy chair, scattering sheaves of illustrated papers, and held out both his hands, with a "Welcome, my dear old friend!"

It would have been vain to scour the world in quest of a handsomer young man than this one. Even Egon von Breitstein would have seemed a mere good looking puppet beside him, and the chancellor rejoiced in the physical perfection of a prince who might prove a dangerous rival for an absent em-

"This is the best of good fortune!" exclaimed Count von Breitstein. "Egon told me you were here, and without waiting to get the note he said you had left for me I came to you straight from the railway station."

"Splendid! And now you must dine with me. It was that I asked of you in my note. Dinner early, a serious talk and an antidote for solemnity in a visit to the Leopoldhalle to see Mlle. Felice from the Folies Bergere do her famous fire and fountain dance. A box, curtains half drawn, no one need know that the chancellor helps his young friend amuse himself."

"I thank your royal highness for the honor you suggest, and nothing could give me greater pleasure if I had not a suggestion to venture, in place of yours, which I believe may suit you better. I think I know of what you wish to talk with me, and I desire the same, while the business I have most at heart"-

"Ah, your business is my business then?

"I hope you may so consider it. In any case it is business carried through now or never and is of life and death importance to those whom it concerns. How it's to be done or whether done at all may depend on you, if you consent to interest yourself, and it could not be in more competent hands. If I'd been given my choice of an assistant out of the whole world I should have chosen your royal highness.' "This sounds like an adventure."

"It may be an adventure and at the

same time an act of justice." "Good. Although it was not in search of an adventure that I came to you, any more than it was the hope of game which brought me on a sudden impulse to my little hunting lodge, still I trust I have always the instinct of a sportsman.'

"I am sure of that, and I have the less hesitation in enlisting your good will because it happens that your bird and mine can be killed with one shot." "Chancellor, you excite my curios-

The old man smiled genially, but under the bristling brows glowed a flame as of the last embers in a dying fire. 'Upstairs," said he, "is a pretty woman, a beauty. She claims the name of Helen Mowbray, though her right to it is mere than disputable. Her love affairs threaten a public scandai."

"Ah, you are not the first one who has spoken of this pretty lady since 1 crossed the frontier this morning," exclaimed the young man, flushing. He paused and bit his lip before going on, as if he wished to think or regain self control, but at last he laughed not altogether lightly. "So the lady most talked about for the moment in all Rhaetla is under the same roof with

"Fortunately she is close at hand." said the chancellor. "To you more than to any other I can open my heart in speaking of our great peril. This girl has drawn the emperor into a fit of moon madness. It is no more serious than that, and were she out of the way he would wake as from a dream. But this is the moment of the crisis. He must be saved now or he is lost forever and all our hopes with him. Blessed would be the man who brought my poor master to his senses. I have tried and failed. But you could do it."

"The sword of justice is ready for

your hand." "That sentence has a solemn ring. I don't see what you want me to do. But what sort of woman is this who has bewitched your grave Leopold?"

"Beautiful and clever as women are clever, but not clever enough to fight her battle out against you and me." The prince laughed again. "It isn't my metier to fight with women. I pre-

fer to make love to them." "Ah, you have said it! That is what I beg your royal highness to do." "How am I to get at her when Leo pold stands guard?"

"He will not be on guard for some

hours.' "Ha, ha! You mean me to understand that there's no time to waste." "Not a moment."

"What is the girl like?" "Tall and slender, pink and white as a flower, dark lashed and yellow hairdriven into town from his new toy, the ed. like an Austrian beauty; eyes gray or violet, it would be heard to say which for a man of my years, but even I can assure you that when the lady looks down, then suddenly up again under those dark lashes, it's something to quicken the pulse of any man under sixty."

'It would quicken mine only to hear corr description if you hadn't just put a maggot in my head that tickles me to laughter instead of raptures," said the prince. "Tell me this-has this girl a tiny black mole just over the left eyebrow, very fetching, and when she smiles does her mouth point upward a bit on the right side, like a fairy signpost showing the way to a small round scar almost as good as a dimple?"

The chancellor reflected for a few econds and then replied that unless his eyesight and his memory had deceived him both these marks were to be met with on Miss Mowbray's face He did not add that he had seen her but once and at the time had not taken interest enough to note details, for it was plain that the prince had a theory as to the lady's real identity and to establish it as a fact might be valuable. "Is it possible that you've already met this dangerous young person?" he asked eagerly.

"Well, I begin to believe it may be so. I'll explain why later. Thereby hangs a confession. At all, events, a certain lady exactly answering the description you've given is very likely in this neighborhood. I've heard that she was shortly due in Kronburg, and it was in my mind when deciding suddenly to spend a few days in the woods for the sake of seeing you that I might see her also before I went home again. As a matter of fact, the lady and I have had a misunderstanding at a rather unfortunate moment, as I'd just imprudently taken her into my confidence concerning-er-some family affairs. If it is she who is masquerading in Rhaetia as Miss Mowbray and turning your emperor's head, it may be that she's trying to revenge herself on me. She's pretty enough to beguile St. Anthony, let alone a St. Leopold, and she's clever enough to have thought out such a scheme. Our small quarrel happened about four weeks ago, and I've lost sight of the lady since. She disappeared, expecting probably to be followed, but she wasn't. The only bray, where did she get the mother? I've heard there is a Mowbray mother." "There's a faded Dresden china shep-

ufactured." The prince was amused. "No; she wouldn't stick at a mother if she

herdess that answers to the name."

you are"-"Oh, I am practically certain!"

"Miss Jenny Brett?" "Did you never hear the name?"

Brett are one and the same."

"If I have I've forgotten it." "Chancellor, you wouldn't forget if highness. Brett is the prettiest if not the most Court theater of Kronburg in a fort- have something to tell you." night, her first engagement in Rhae-

she's been having a game with us-a each other completely now, but I'm game that we can prevent now, thank growing old, and the past few days heaven, from ending in earnest." growing old, and the past few days heaven, from ending in earnest."

"Oh, yes; we can prevent that." "Your royal highness met the lady

in your own country?" "N-o. It was in Paris at first, but I'm afraid I induced her to accept an engagement at home. We were great to find the girl, and once they've had friends for awhile, and really she's a charming creature. I can't blame my self. Who would have guessed that she'd turn out so ambitious? By Jove, I can sympathize with Leopold. The girl tried to twist me round her finger and, I verily believe, fancied at one time that I would offer her marriage." "It must be the same girl. And the

emperor has offered her marriage." "What? Impossible! But-with the left hand, of course, though even that would be unheard of for a man in

"I swear to your royal highness that if he isn't stopped he will force her on

the Rhaetian people as empress." "Gad-little Jenny Brett! I didn't half appreciate her brilliant qualities." "Yet I would wager that she appre-

ciated yours." The prince shrugged his shoulders 'I believe she really cared something for me-a month ago."

"Then she still cares. You are not a man whom a woman can forget, though pique or ambition may lead her to try tell you frankly I believe that Providence sent your royal highness here at this moment, and my best hopes precautions, may be in vain. He are now pinned on you. You-and no one as well as you-can save the emperor for a nobler fate. Even when I supposed you a stranger to this lady who calls herself Helen Mowbray I thought that if you would consent to meet her and exercise your fascinations there might be hope of averting the danger from my master. Now I hope everything. I beg, I entreat, that your royal highness will send up your name and ask the lady to see you without delay. She will certainly receive you, and when the emperor learns that she has done so it may go far to disfilusion him, for, pardon me, your royal highness has a great reputation as a lady killer. Still more valuable would be, however-indeed, he would be cured of his infatuation forever-if-if"-

"If what?" inquired the young man, tired of the chancellor's long windedness and beating about the bush.

"If you could persuade her to go out to your hunting lodge. Then Leopold and Rhaetia would be saved by you. What could be better? What could be more suitable?

"What, indeed," echoed the prince. "for every one concerned except for Jenny Brett?"

"Considering the havoc she has worked among as all, need she be considquestion is. If she's playing Miss Mow- ered before the interests of a great country and, perhaps I may hint, an innocent and lovely royal lady whom this gir! is doing her best to humili-

said the chancellor dryly. "But these : "I'm hanged if she need be so conmantelpiece ornaments are easily man-sidered! Anyhow I'll do what you ask. I'll send up my card, and then we'll see what happens.'

The prince took from his pocket a wanted one," he chuckled. "And, while small gold case sparkling with jewels, she was about it, she has apparently a trifle which advertised itself as the annexed a whole family tree. The gift of a woman. Out of this came a black mole and the scar dimple-you're card, with a crown over the name in sure of them, chancellor? Because, if the fashion of his country and some others. An equerry waiting in an adjoining room was summoned, the card "Then the more pieces in the puzzle given to him, passed on to a hotel servwhich I fit together the more likely ant, and then for five minutes, ten mindoes it seem that your Leopold's Miss utes, the old man and the young one Helen Mowbray and my Miss Jenny waited, talking of a subject very near to both their hearts.

At last, when they had no more to say, word came that Lady Mowbray and Miss Mowbray would see his royal

you were a few years younger. Jenny "The value of a well regulated mother!" laughed the young man, who had talented singer ever sent out from not troubled to inquire for Lady Mow-Australia, the fashionable home of bray. "Well, whatever comes of this singers. She is billed to sing at the interview, chancellor, I shall presently

"The suspense will be hard to bear," said Count von Breltstein, "but I have "You are right. It may well be that perfect faith in you. We understand

pray you, all that's at stake and do not hesitate for an instant. Have no false scruple with such a person as this. The emperor will soon arrive in Kronburg. He'll lose no time in trying



"I'll send up my card."

another meeting all our plans, all our searches for her to offer his crown." The prince listened and did not smile as he went out.

He had bidden the chancellor await (Continued on page Three.)

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